THE
BLACKE BOOKES
MESSENGER.

Laying open the Life and Death

of *Ned Browne* one of the most notable Cutpurses, *Crosbiters, and Conny-catchers, that euer lined in England.*

Heerein hee telleth verie pleasantly in his owne person such strange prancks and monstrous villanies by him and his Consorte performed, as the like was yet neuer heard of in any of the former bookes of Conny-catching.

Read and be warnd, Laugh as you like,
Iudge as you find.

Nascimur pro Patria.

by R. G.

Printed at London by Iohn Danter, for *Thomas Nelson* dwelling in Siluer streete, neere to the signe of the Red-Crosse. 1592.

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To the Curteous Reader Health.

GEntlemen, I knowe you haue long expected the comming foorth of my *Blacke Booke*, which I long haue promised, and which I had many daies since finished, had not sickenes hinderted my intent: Neuertheleſſe, be assured it is the first thing I meane to publish after I am recouered. This Messenger to my *Blacke Booke* I commit to your curteous censures, being written before I fell sick, which I thoght good in the meane time to send you as a Fayring, discoursing *Ned Brownes* villanies, which are too many to bee described in my *Blacke Booke*.

I had thought to haue ioyned with this Treatise, a pithy discourse of the Repentance of a Conny-catcher lately executed out of Newgate, yet for asmuch as the Methode of the one is so far differing from the other, I altered my opinion, and the rather for that the one died resolute and desperate, the other penitent and passionate. For the Conny-catchers repentance

which shall shortly be published, it containes a passion of great importance, First how he was giuen ouer from all grace and Godlines, and seemed to haue no sparke of the feare of God in him: yet neuertheleſſe, through the woonderfull working of Gods spirite, euen in the dungeon at Newgate the night before he died, he so repented him from the bottome of his hart, that it may well beseeme Parents to haue it for their Children, Masters for their seruants, and to bee perused of euery honest person with great regard.

And for Ned Browne of whome my Messenger makes report, hee was a man infamous for his bad course of life and well knowne about London: Hee was in outward shew a Gentlemanlike companion attyred very braue, and to shadowe his villany the more would nominate himselfe to be a Marshall man, who when he had nipt a Bung or cut a good purse, he would steale ouer into the Lowe Countries, there to tast three or foure Stoapes of Rhenish wine, and then come ouer forsooth a braue Souldier: But at last hee leapt at a daysie for his loose kind of life, and therefore imagine you now see him in his owne person, standing in a great bay windowe with a halter about his necke ready to be hanged, desperately pronounsing this his whole course of life and confesseth as followeth.

Yours in all curtesie, R. G.

A Table of the words of Art lately deuiſed by *Ned Browne* and his aſſociates, to *Crosbite the old Phraſes vſed in the manner of Conny-catching.*

HE that drawes the fiſh to the bait,	*the Beater.*
The Tauerne where they goe,	*the Buſh.*
The foole that is caught,	*the Bird.*
Connycatching to be called,	*Batfowling.*
The wine to be called,	*the Shrap.*
The Cards to be called,	*the Limetwigs.*
The fetching in a Conny,	*beating the buſh*
The good Aſſe if he be woone,	*ſtooping to the Lure.*
If he keepe aloofe,	*a Hoggard.*
The verſer in conny-catching is called,	*The Retriuer.*
And the Barnacle,	*the pot hunter.*

THE LIFE AND death of Ned Browne, a notable Cutpurse and Conny-catcher.

If you thinke (Gentlemen) to heare a repentant man speake, or to tel a large tale of his penitent sorrowes, ye are deceiued: for as I haue euer liued lewdly, so I meane to end my life as resolutely, and not by a cowardly confession to attempt the hope of a pardon. Yet, in that I was famous in my life for my villainies, I will at my death professe my selfe as notable, by discoursing to you all merrely, the manner and methode of my knaueries, which if you hear without laughing, then after my death call me base knaue, and neuer haue me in remembrance.

Know therfore (Gentlemen) that my parents were honest, of good reporte, and no little estéeme amongst their neighbours, and sought (if good nurture and education would haue serued) to haue made me an honest man: but as one selfe same ground brings forth flowers and thistles; so of a sound stocke prooued an vntoward Syen; and of a vertuous father, a most vicious sonne. It bootes little to rehearse the pettie sinnes of my Non-age; as disobedience to my parentes, con-

tempt of good counsaile, despising of mine elders, filching, pettilashery, and such trifling toyes: but with these follyes I inurde myselfe, till waxing in yeares, I grew into greater villanies. For when I came to eighteene yeares olde, what sinne was it that I would not commit with greedinesse, what attempt so bad, that I would not endeuour to execute; Cutting of purses, stealing of hozses, lifting, picking of lockes, and all other notable cossenages. Why, I helde them excellent qualities, and accounted him vnwozthy to liue, that could not, oz durst not liue by such damnable pzactises. Yet as sinne too openly manifested to the eye of the Magistrate, is eyther soze reuenged oz soone cut off: So I to pzeuent that, had a nette wherein to daunce, and diuers shadowes to colour my knaueries withall, as I would title my selfe with the name of a Fencer, & make Gentlemen belæue that I pickt a liuing out by that mysterie, whereas God wot, I had no other fence but with my shozt knife, and a paire of purse stringes, and with them in troth many a bowt haue I had in my time In torth: O what a simple oth was this to cõfirm a mans credit withall: Why, I sée the halter will make a man holy, foz whilest God suffered mee to flourish, I scozned to disgrace my mouth with so smal an oath as In faith: but I rent God in pæces, swearing and fozswearing by euery part of his body, that such as heard mæ, rather trembled at mine oathes, than feared my braues, and yet foz courage and resolution I refer myselfe to all them that haue euer heard of my name.

Thus animated to dõ wickednes, I fell to take delight in the companie of harlots, amongst whome, as I spent what I gotte, so I suffered not them I was acquainted

# of Ned Browne.

quainted withall to fether their nestes, but would at my pleasure strippe them of all that they had. What bad woman was there about London, whose champion I would not be for a few Crownes, to fight, sweare and stare in her behalfe, to the abuse of any that should doo Iustice vpon her? I still had one or two in store to crosbite withall, which I vsed as snares to trap simple men in: for if I tooke but one suspitiously in her companie, straight I berst vpon him, and crossebit him for all the money in his purse. By the way (sith sorrow cannot helpe to saue me, let mée tell you a mery iest how once I crosse-bit a Waltman, that would néedes bée so wanton, as when hee had shut his Walt to haue a wench, and thus the Iest fell out.

The life and death

A pleasant Tale how Ned Browne crossebit a Maltman.

THis Sencr Fornicator, this olde Letcher, vsing continually into White Chappell had a haunt into Petticote Lane to a Trugging house there, and fell into great familiaritie with a good wench that was a frend of mine, who one day reuealed vnto me how she was well thought on by a Maltman, a wealthie olde Churle, and that ordinarily twise a weeke he did visite her, and therefore bad me plot some meanes to fetch him ouer for some crownes. I was not to seeke for a quicke inuention, and resolued at his comming to crossebite him, which was (as luck serued) the next day. Monsieur the Maltman comming according to his custome, was no sooner secretly shut in the chamber with the wench, but I came stepping in with a terrible looke, swearing as if I meant to haue challenged the earth to haue opened and swallowed me quicke, and presently fell vpon her and beat her: then I turned to the Maleman, and lent him a blow or two, for he would take no more: he was a stout stiffe olde tough Churle, and then I rayld vpon them both, and obiected to him how long he had kept my Wife, how my neighbors could tell me of it, how the Lane thought ill of me for suffering it, and now that I had my self taken them together, I would make both him and her smart for it before we parted.

The olde Foxe that knew the Oxe by the horne, was subtill enough to spie a pad in the straw, and to see that we went about to crossebite him, wherefore hee stoode

stiffe,

ſtiffe, and denied all, and although the whore cunningly on her knées wéping did confeſſe it, yet the Waultman faced her downe, and ſaid ſhe was an honeſt woman for all him, and that this was but a coſſenage compacted betwéene her and me to verſe and croſſbite him for ſome péece of money for amends, but ſith hee knew himſelfe cleare, he would neuer graunt to pay one penny. I was ſtraight in mine oathes, and braued him with ſending for the Conſtable, but in vaine, all our pollicies could not draw one croſſe from this crafty olde Carle, till I gathering my wits together, came ouer his fallowes thus. I kept him ſtill in the chamber, & ſent (as though I had ſent for the Conſtable) for a frend of mine, an auntient coſſener, and one that had a long time béene a Knight of the Poſt, marry hee had a faire cloake and a Damaſke coate, that ſerued him to bayle men withall. To this periured companion I ſent to come as a Conſtable, to make the Waltman ſtoupe, who (readie to execute any villanie that I ſhould plot) came ſpédily like an auncient welthy Citizen, and taking the office of a Conſtable in hand, began very ſtearnly to examine the matter, and to deale indifferently, rather fauoring the Waltman than me: but I complained how long he had kept my Wife, he anſwered I lyed, & that it was a coſſenage to croſſebite him of his money. Was Conſtable cunningly made this reply to vs both: My frends, this matter is bad, and truly I cannot in conſcience but look i to it. For you Browne, you complaine how he hath abuſed your wife along time, & ſhee partly confeſſeth as much: he (who ſéems to bee an honeſt man, and of ſome countenance amongſt his neighbors) forſwears it and ſaith, it is but a deuiſe to ſtrip him of his mony: I know

not whom to beléeue, and therfore this is my beſt courſe becauſe the one of you ſhall not laugh the other to ſcorn I le ſend you all three to the Counter, ſo to anſwere it before ſome Iuſtice that may take examination of the matter. The Maltman loth to goe to priſon, and yet vnwilling to part from any pence, ſaide he was willing to anſwere the matter before any man of worſhippe, but hee deſired the Conſtable to fauour him that hee might not goe to ward, and he would ſend for a Brewer a friend of his to be his Baile.

In faith ſaies this cunning old Coſener, you offer like an honeſt man, but I cannot ſtay ſo long till he bee ſent for, but if you meane as you proteſt to anſwer the matter, then leaue ſome pawne and I will let you goe whither you will while to morrow, and then come to my houſe here hard by at a Grocers ſhop, and you and I will goe before a Iuſtice and then cleare your ſelfe as you may. The maltman taking this crafty knaue to be ſome ſubſtantiall Citizen, thanked him for his friendſhip and gaue him a ſeale ring that he wore on his fore-finger, promiſing the next morning to méete him at his houſe. Aſſoone as my friend had the ring, away walkes he, and while we ſtood brabling together he went to the Brewars houſe with whome this Maltman traded and deliuered the Brewar the Ring as a token from the Maltman ſaying he was in trouble, and that he deſired him by that token to ſend him ten pound. The Brewar ſéeing an auntient Citizen bringing the meſſage and knowing the Maltmans Ring, ſtood vpon no tearmes ſith he knew his Chapman wogld and was able to anſwere it againe if it were a brace of hundreth pounds, deliuered him the money without any more a-

dow. which ten pound at night we shard betwixt vs, and left the maltman to talke with the Brewar about the repaiment. Tush this was one of my ordinary shifts, for I was holden in my time the most famous Crosbyter in all London: Well at length as wedding and hanging comes by destenie, I would to auoide the spæch of the world bee married forsooth and kæpe a house, but (Gentlemen) I hope you that heare mee talke of marriage, do presently imagine that sure she was some vertuous matrone that I chose out. Shal I say my conscience, she was a little snowt faire, but the commonst harlot and backster that euer made fray vnder the shadowe of Colman hedge: wedded to this trull, what villanie could I deuise but shee would put in practise, and yet though shee could foyst a pocket well, and get me some pence, and lifte nowe and then for a nede, and with the lightnes of hir hæles bring mee in some crownes: yet I wax wearie, and stucke to the olde prouerbe, that chaunge of pasture makes fat Calues: I thought that in liuing with mé two yeares she liued a yére too long, and therfore casting mine eye on a pretty wench, a mans wife well knowne about London, I fell in loue with her, and that so deepely that I broke the matter to her husband, that I loued his wife, and must nedes haue hir, and confirmd it with many othes, that if he did not consent to it, I would bæ his death: whereuppon her husband, a kind Knaue, and one euerie way as base a companion as my selfe, agréed to me, and we bet a bargaine, that I should haue his Wife, and he should haue mine, conditionally, that I should giue him fiue pounds to bote, which I promised, though he neuer had it: so wé like two good Horse-coysers, made a choppe and

change,

change, and swapt vp a Rogish bargaine, and so he maried my wife and I his. Thus Gentlemen did I neither feare God nor his lawes, nor regarded honestie, manhood, or conscience, but these be trifles and veniall sinnes. Now sir, let me boast of my selfe a little, in that I came to the credite of a high Lawyer, and with my sword freebooted abroad in the country like a Cauelier on horsebacke, wherein I did excell for subtelty: For I had first for my selfe an artificiall haire, and a beard so naturally made, that I could talke, dine, and sup in it, and yet it should neuer bee spied. I will tell you there rests no greater villany than in this practise, for I haue robbed a man in the morning, and come to the same Inne and bayted, yea and dyned with him the same day, and for my horse that he might not be knowne I coulde ride him one part of the day like a goodly Gelding with a large tayle hanging to his fetlockes, and the other part of the day I could make him a Cut, for I had an artificiall taile so cunningly counterfeited, that the Ostler when hee drest him coulde not perceiue it. By these pollicies I little cared for Hues and Cries but straight with disguising my selfe, would outslip them all, and as for my Cloake it was Tarmosind (as they doe tearme it) made with two outsides that I could turne it how I list, for howsoeuer I wore it the right side still seemed to be outward: I remember howe prettily once I serued a Priest, and because one death dischargeth all, and is as good as a generall pardon, heare how I serued him.

# of Ned Browne.

A merrie tale how Ned Browne vsed a Priest.

I Chaunced as I road into Barkeshire to light in the company of a fat Priest that had hanging at his saddle bow a capcase well stuft with Crowns, that he went to pay for the purchase of some lands: Falling in talke with him (as communication will growe betwixt trauellers) I behaued my selfe so demurely, that he tooke me for a very honest man, & was glad of my company, although ere we parted it cost him very deare: and amongst other chat he questioned me if I would sell my horse (for hee was a faire large Gelding well spread and forheaded, and so easily and swiftly paced, that I could well ride him seauen mile an houre) I made him answere that I was loth to part from my Gelding, and so shapte him a slight reply, but before wee came at our baite hee was so in loue with him that I might say him no nay, so that when wee came at our Inne and were at dinner together we swapt a bargain: I had the Priests and twenty Nobles to boote for mine. Well assone as we had changse I got mee into the stable, and there secretly I knit a haire about the horse fetlock so straight vpon the veine that hee began a little to checke of that foote. so that when he was brought forth the horse began to halt; which the Priest espying maruelld at it, and began to accuse me that I had deceiued him. Well quoth I tis nothing but a blood, and assone as hee is warme hee will goe well, and if in riding you like him not, for twenty shillings losse Ile change with you at night, the Priest was glad of this, and caused his sad-

dle to be set on my gelding, and so hauing his Capcase on the saddle pummell, rode on his way, and I with him, but still his horse halted, and by that time we were two myles out of the towne hee halted right downe: at which the Priest chaft, and I saide I wondred at it, and thought he was prickt, bad him alight and I would see what he ayled, and wisht him to get vp of my horse that I had of him for a mile or two, and I would ride of his, to trie if I could driue him from his hault. The Priest thankt me, and was sorrowfull, and I fæling about his foote, crackt the haire asunder, and when I had done got vp on him, smiling to my selfe to sée the Capcase hang so mannerly before mée, and putting spurs to the horse, made him giue way a little, but beeing somewhat stiffe, he halted for halfe a mile, and then began to fall into his olde pace, which the Priest spying, said: Me thinks my Gelding begins to leaue his halting. I marry doth hée Maister Parson (quoth I) I warrant you hele gallop too fast for you to ouertake, and so good Priest farewell, and take no thought for the carriage of your Capcase. With that I put spurres to him lustily, and away flung I like the wind: the Parson calde to mæ, and sayde hee hoped that I was but in ieast, but he found it in earnest, for he neuer had his horse nor his capcase after.

Gentlemen, this is but a ieast to a number of villanies that I haue acted, so gracelesse hath my life bæne. The most expert and skilful Alcumist, neuer tooke more pains in experience of his mettals, the Phisition in his simples, the Mecanicall man in the mysterie of his occupation, than I haue done in plotting precepts, rules, axiomes, and principles, how smoothly and neately to foist a pocket, or nyppe a bung.

It

The life and death

It were too tedious to holde you with tales of the wonders I haue acted, seeing almost they bee numberlesse, or to make report how desperately I did execute them, eyther without feare of God, dread of the Law, or loue to my Country: for I was so resolutely, or rather reprobately giuen, that I held Death only as Natures due, and howsoeuer ignominiously it might happen vnto mee, that I little regarded: which careleſſe disdain to die, made me thrust my selfe into euery braule, quarrell, and other bad action whatsoeuer, running headlong into all mischiefe neyther respecting the ende, nor foreseeing the danger, and that secure life hath brought me to this dishonorable death. But what should I stand heere preaching? I liued wantonly, and therefore let me end merrily, and tel you two or three of my mad prankes and so bid you farewell. Amongst the rest I remember once walking vp and downe Smithfield, very quaintly attired in a fustian dublet and buffe hose, both layde downe with golde lace, a silke stocke and a new Cloke, I traced vp and downe verie solemnly, as hauing neuer a crosse to blesse me withall, where being in my dumps there happened to me this accident following.

The life and death

A pleasant tale how Ned Brown kist a Gentlewoman and cut her purse.

THus Gentlemen beeing in my dumps, I sawe a braue Countrey Gentlewoman comming along from saint Bartlemewes in a satten Gowne, and foure men attending vpon her: by her side shée had hanging a maruellous rich purse embroydred, and not so faire without but it séemed to be as wel lined within: At this my téeth watered, and as the pray makes the thiefe, so necessity and the sight of such a faire purse begaune to muster a thousand inuentions in my heade how to come by it: to goe by her and Nip it I could not, because shée had so many men attending on hir: to watch hir into a presse that was in vaine, for going towards S. Johns stréete, I gest her about to take horse to ride home, because all her men were booted. Thus perplexed for this purse, and yet not so much for the boung as the shels: I at last resolutely vowed in my selfe, to haue it though I stretcht a halter for it: and so casting in my head how to bring my fine Mistris to the blow, at last I performed it thus. Shée standing and talking a while with a Gentleman I kept before hir and leaned at the Barre till I saw hir leaue him, and then stalking towards hir very stoutly as if I had béene some young Caualier or Captaine, I met her and curteously saluted her, & not onely gréeted her, but as if I had bén acquainted with her I gaue her a kisse, and so in taking acquaintance closing very familiarly to her I cut her purse: the Gentlewoman séeing me so braue vsed mee kindly, & blushing said, shée knew me not. Are you not Mistres quoth

I

I, such a Gentlewoman, and such a mans Wife? No truly sir, quoth she you mistake me: then I cry you mercie quoth I, and am sorry that I was so saucily bolde. There is no harme done sir sayde shee, because there is no offence taken, and so we parted, I with a good bung, and my Gentlewoman with a kisse, which I dare safely sweare, she bought as deare as euer shee did thing in her life, for what I found in the purse that I kéep to my selfe. Thus did I plot deuises in my head how to profit my selfe, though it were to the vtter vndoing of anie one: I was the first that inuented the letting fall of the key, which had like to cost me deare, but it is all one, as good then as now: and thus it was.

How Ned Browne let fall a key,

WAlking vp and downe Paules, I saw where a Noble mans brother in England came with certaine Gentlemen his frendes in at the West doore, and how hee put vp his purse, as hauing bought some thing in the Churchyard: I hauing an Eagles eye, spied a good bung containing many shels as I gest, carelesly put vp into his sleeue, which draue me straight into a mutinie with my selfe how to come by it. I lookt about me if I could see any of my fellow frends walking there, & straight I found out three or foure trusty foists with whom I talkt and conferd about this purse: we all concluded it were necessary to haue it, so wee could plot a meanes how to catch it. At last I set downe the course thus: as soone as the throng grew great, and that there was Justling in Paules for roome, I stept before the Gentleman and let fall a key, which stooping

to take vp, I ſtaid the Gentleman that he was faine to thruſt by mee, while in the preſſe two of my frends foiſted his purſe, and away they went withall, and in it there was ſome twentie pound in gold: preſently putting his hande in his pocket for his handkercher, hee miſt his purſe, and ſuſpected that he that let fall the key had it; but ſuppoſitions are vaine, and ſo was his thinking ſeing he knew me not, for till this day he neuer ſet eye of his purſe.

There are a number of my companions yet liuing in England. who being men for all companies, will by once conuerſing with a man, ſo draw him to them, that he ſhall thinke nothing in the world too deare for them, and neuer bee able to parte from them, vntill he hath ſpent all he hath.

If he bee laſciuiouſly addicted, they haue Aretines Tables at their fingers endes, to feed him on with new kind of filthines, they wil come in with Rous the french Painter, and what an vſuall vaine in bawdery hee had: not a whore or queane about the towne but they know, and can tell you her marks, and where and with whom ſhe hoſts.

If they ſee you couetouſly bent, they wil tel you wonders of the Philoſophers ſtone, and make you beleeue they can make golde of Gooſe-greace: onely you muſt bee at ſome two or three hundred pounds coſt, or ſuch a trifling matter, to helpe to ſet vp their Styles, and then you need not care where you begge your bread, for they will make you doe little better if you followe their preſcriptions.

Diſcourſe with them of Countries, they will ſet you on fire with trauailing, yea what place is it they will

not

The life and death

not sweare they haue bene in, and I warrant you tell such a sound tale, as if it were all Gospell they spake: not a corner in Fraunce but they can describe. Venice, why it is nothing, for they haue intelligence from it euery houre, & at euery worde will come in with Strado Curtizano, and tell you such miracles of Madam Padilia and Romana Imperia, that you will bee mad tyll you bee out of England. And if hee see you are caught with that bait, he will make as though hee would leaue you and faine businesse about the Court, or that such a Noble man sent for him, when you wil rather consent to robbe all your frends, than be seuered from him one hower. If you request his company to trauel, he wil say In faith I cannot tell: I would sooner spend my life in your company than in any mans in England, but at this time I am not so prouided of money as I would, therefore I can make you no promise: and if a man should aduenture vpon such a iourney without money, it were miserable and base, and no man will care for vs. Tut, money say you (like a liberall young maister) take no care for that, for I haue so much land and I wil sell it, my credite is so much, and I will vse it: I haue the keping of a Cosens chamber of mine, which is an old Counsellor, & he this vacation time is gone downe into the Country, we will breake vp his studie, rifle his chests, diue into the bottome of his bags, but wee will haue to serue our turne: rather than faile, we wil sel his books, pawne his bedding and hangings, & make riddãce of all his houshold stuffe to set vs packing. To this he listens a little & sayes: These are some hopes yet, but if he should go with you, and you haue money & he none, you will dominere ouer him at your pleasure, and then

he

be were well set vp, to leaue such possibilities in England, and be made a slaue in another Countrey: With that you offer to part halfes with him, or put all you haue into his custodie, before hee shoulde thinke you meant otherwise then well with him. Hee takes you at your offer, and promiseth to husband it so for you, that you shall spend with the best and yet not waste so much as you doe: which makes you (meaning simply) put him in trust and giue him the purse: Then all a boone voyage into the low Countries you truoge, so to trauel vp into Italie, but per varios casus & tot discrimina rerum in a Towne of Garrison he leaues you, runnes away with your money, and makes you glad to betake your selfe to prouant, and to be a Gentleman of a Company. If hee feare you will make after him, hee will change his name, and if there be any better Gentleman than other in the Countrey where hee sojourne, his name hee will borrowe, and crepe into his kindred, or it shall cost him a fall, and make him pay sweetely for it in the end, if he take not the better hede. Thus will he bee sure to haue one Alls or other a foote, on whom hee may pray, and euer to haue newe inuentions to keepe himselfe in pleasing.

There is no Art but he will haue a superficiall sighe into, and put downe euery man with talke, and when he hath vttered the most he can, makes men beleue that hee knowes tenne times more than hee will put into their heads, which are secrets not to be made common to euerie one.

He will perswade you hee hath twentie receiptes of Loue powders: that hee can frame a Ring with such a quaint deuise, that if a Wench put it on her finger, she

ſhé ſhall not chooſe but followe you vp and downe the ſtrætes.

If you haue an enemie that you would faine be ryd of, hæle teach you to poyſon him with your very lookes. To ſtande on the top of Paules with a burning glaſſe in your hande, and caſt the Sunne with ſuch a force on a mans face that walkes vnder, that it ſhall ſtrike him ſtarke dead more violently than lightning.

To fill a Letter full of Nædles, which ſhall bee laide after ſuch a Mathematicall order, that when hæ opens it to whome it is ſent, they ſhall all ſpring vp and flye into his body as forceably, as if they had bæne blowne vp with gunpowder, or ſent from a Calliuers mouth like ſmall ſhotte.

To conclude, he will haue ſuch probable reaſons to procure beliefe to his lyes, ſuch a ſmooth tongue to deliuer them, and ſet them forth with ſuch a grace, that a very wiſe man he ſhould be that did not ſwallowe the Gudgin at his hands.

In this ſorte haue I knowne ſundry young Gentlemen of England trayned forth to their own deſtruction, which makes mæ the more willing to forewarne other of ſuch baſe companions.

Wherefore, for the rooting out of theſe ſlye inſinuating Mothworms, that eate men out of their ſubſtance vnſæne, and are the decay of the forwardeſt Gentlemen and beſt wittes: it were to bæ wiſhed that Amaſis Law were reuiued, who ordayned that euery man at the yeares ende ſhoulde giue account to the Magiſtrate how he liued, and he that did not ſo, or could not make an account of an honeſt life, to be put to death as a Felon without fauour or pardon.

Ye haue about London, that (to the disgrace of Gentlemen liue gentlemen-like of themselues, hauing neythere money nor Lande, nor any lawfull meanes to maintain them: some by play, and they go amumming into the Countrey all Christmas time with false dice, or if ther be any place where gentlemen or Marchants frequent in the Citty or Towne corporat, thyther will they, either disguised like ponge Marchants, or substantiall Cittizens, and drawe them all dry that euer deale with them.

There are some doe nothing but walke vp & downe Paules, or come to mens shops to buy wares, with budgets of writings vnder their armes, & these will talke with any man about their sutes in Lawe, and discourse vnto them how these and these mens bonds they haue for money, that are the chiefest dealers in London, Norwich, Bristowe, and such like places, & complaine that they cannot get one penny. Why if such a man doth owe it you, (will some man say that knowes him) I durst buy the debt of you, let me gette it of him as I can: O saieth my budget man, I haue his hand and seale to shewe, looke here els, and with that pluckes out a counterfaite band, (as all his other writings are) and reades it to him: whereupon, for halfe in halfe they presently compound, and after he hath that tenne pound payd him for his band of twentie, besides the forfeiture, or so forth, he saies faith these Lawyers drinke me as drie as a siue, and I haue money to pay at such a day, and I doubt I shall not be able to compasse it. Here are all the Leases and Euidences of my Lande lying in such a shyre, could you lend me fortie pound on them till the next Tearme, or for some sixe

Monthes

Monthes, and it shall then be repayd with interest, or Ile forfeit my whole inheritance, which is better worth than a hundred markes a yeare.

The welthy Gentleman, or yong Novice, that hath store of Crownes lying by him, greedy of such a bargaine, thinking (perhaps) by one clause or other to defeate him of all he hath, lends him money, and takes a faire Statute marchant of his Lands before a Judge: but when all comes to al, he hath no more land in England then a younger brothers inheritance, nor doth any such great Occupier as he faineth, know him: much lesse owe him any money: whereby my couetous maister is cheated fortie or fiftie pound thick at one clap.

Not vnlike to these, are they, that comming to Ordinaries about the Exchange, where marchants do table for the most part, will say they haue two or three shippes of Coles new come from Newcastle, and wish they could light on a good chapman, that would deale for them altogether. Whats your price saith one? Whats your price? saith another. He holds them at the first at a very high rate, and sets a good face on it, as though he had such traffique indeed, but afterward comes downe so lowe, that euery man striues who shall giue him earnest first, and ere he be aware, he hath fortie shillings clapt in his hand, to assure the bargaine to some one of them: he puts it vp quietly, and bids them enquire for him at such a signe and place, where he neuer came, signifying also his name: when in troth hee is but a coozening companion, and no such man to bee found. Thus goes he cléere away with fortie shillings in his purse for nothing, and they vnlike to sée him any more.

The life and death

A merry Ieast how Ned Brownes wife was crosse-bitten in her owne Arte.

BUt heere note (Gentlemen) though I haue done many sleights, and crossbitten sundry persons: yet so long goes the pitcher to the water, that at length it comes broken home. Which prouerbe I haue séene verified: for I remember once that I supposing to crosbite a Gentleman who had some ten pound in his slæue left my wife to performe the accident, who in the ende was crossebitten her selfe: and thus it fel out. She compacted with a Hooker, whom some call a Curber, & hauing before bargained with the Gentleman to tell her tales in her eare all night, hee came according to promise, who hauing supt and going to bed, was aduised by my wife to lay his clothes in the window, where the Hookers Crome might crossbite them from him: yet secretly intending before in the night time to steale his money forth of his slæue. They beeing in bed together slept soundly: yet such was his chaunce, that he sodenly wakened long before her, & being sore troubled with a laske, rose vp and made a double vse of his Chamber pot: that done, he intended to throw it forth at the window, which the better to performe, he first remoued his clothes from thence; at which instant the spring of the window rose vp of the owne accord. This sodainly amazed him so, that he leapt backe, leauing the chamber pot still standing in the window, fearing that the deuill had béen at hand. By & by he espyed a faire iron Crome come marching in at the window, which in steade of the dublet and hose he sought for, sodenly tooke hold of that homely seruice in the member vessell, and so plucke goodman Iurdaine with all his contents downe pat on

the

the Curbers pate. Neuer was gentle Angler so drest, for his face, his head, and his necke, were all besmeared with the soft sirreuerence, so as hee stunke worse than a Jakes Farmer. The Gentleman hearing one cry out, and seeing his messe of altogether so strangely taken away, began to take hart to him, and looking out perceiued the Curber lys almost brained, almost drowned, & well neare poysoned therewith: whereat laughing hartily to himselfe, hee put on his owne clothes, and gotte him secretly away, laying my wiues clothes in the same place, which the gentle Angler some after tooke; but neuer could she get them againe till this day.

This (Gentlemen) was my course of life, and thus I got much by villany, and spent it amongst whores as carelessely: I sildome or neuer listened to the admonition of my frendes, neither did the fall of other men learne me to beware, and therefore am I brought now to this end: yet little did I think to haue laid my bones in Fraunce, I thought (indeed) that Tyburne would at last haue shakt me by the necke: but hauing done villany in England, this was alwaies my course, to slip ouer into the Low Countries, and there for a while play the souldiour, and partly that was the cause of my coming hither: for growing odious in and about London for my filching, lifting, nipping, foysting and crosbiting, that euery one held me in contempt, and almost disdained my companie, I resolued to come ouer into Fraunce, by bearing Armes to winne some credite, determining with my selfe to become a true man. But as men, though they chaunge Countries, alter not their minds: so giuen ouer by God into a reprobate sence, I had no feeling of goodnes, but with the dogge fell to my

olde domit, and héere moſt wickedly I haue committed ſacrilege, robd a Church, and done other miſchæuous pranks, for which iuſtly I am condemned and muſt ſuffer death: whereby I learne, that reuenge deferd is not quittanſt: that though God ſuffer the wicked for a time, yet hee paies home at length; for while I laſciuiouſly lead a careleſſe life, if my friendes warned mé of it, I ſcoft at them, & if they told me of the gallowes, I would ſweare it was my deſtenie, and now I haue proued my ſelfe no lyar: yet muſt I die more baſely, and be hangd out at a window.

Oh Countrymen and Gentlemen, I haue helde you long, as good at the firſt as at the laſt, take then this for a fare well: Truſt not in your owne wits, for they will become too wilfull oft, and ſo deceiue you. Boaſt not in ſtrength, nor ſtand not on your manhood, ſo to maintain quarrels; for the end of brawling is confuſion: but vſe your courage in defence of your country, and then feare not to die; for the bullet is an honorable death. Beware of whores, for they be the Syrens that draw men on to deſtruction, their ſwét words are inchantments, their eyes allure, and their beauties bewitch: Oh take héede of their perſwaſions, for they be Crocodiles, that when they wéepe, deſtroy. Truth is honorable, and better is it to be a poore honeſt man, than a rich & wealthy théefe: for the faireſt end is the gallowes, and what a ſhame is it to a mans frends, when hee dies ſo baſely. Scorne not labour (Gentlemen) nor hold not any courſe of life bad or ſeruile, that is profitable and honeſt, leaſt in giuing your ſelues ouer to idleneſſe, and hauing no yérly maintenance, you fall into many preiudiciall miſchiefs Contemne not the verteous counſaile of a frend,

despise not the hearing of Gods Ministers, scoffe not at the Magistrates, but feare God, honor your Prince, and loue your country, then God will blesse you, as I hope he will do me for all my manifolde offences, and so Lord into thy hands I commit my spirit, and with that he himselfe sprung out at the window and died.

Here by the way you shall vnderstand, that going ouer into Fraunce, he neare vnte Arx robd a Church, & was therefore condemned, and hauing no gallowes by, they hangd him out at a window, fastning the roape about the Bar: and thus this Ned Browne dies miserably, that all his life time had beene full of mischiefe & villany, sleightly at his death regarding the state of his soule. But note a wonderfull iudgement of God shewed vpon him after his death: his body being taken down, & buried without the towne, it is verified, that in the night time there came a company of Wolues, and tore him out of his graue, and eate him vp, where as there lay many souldiers buried, & many dead carcasses, that they might haue prayde on to haue filled their hungry paunches. But the iudgments of God as they are iust, so they are inscrutable: yet thus much we may coniecture, that as he was one that delighted in rapine and stealth in his life, so at his death the rauenous Wolues deuoured him, & pluckt him out of his graue, as a man not worthy to be admitted to the honor of any buryall Thus haue I set downe the life and death of Ned Browne, a famous Cutpurse and Conny-catcher, by whose example if any be profited, I haue the desired ende of my labour.

FINIS.